ADDENDUM TO CHAPTER XVI: Supramundane Dhamma is *Akaliko* (Immediately Effective)

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Now certain scholars hold the view that after the attainment of Path, Fruition need not arise immediately but can be delayed. They arrive at this conclusion due to mis-interpretation of the terms 'Faith follower' and 'Dhamma follower' in *Alagaddupama Sutta* of Majjhima Nikaya.

1. Question: Is it Possible for One to Attain *Magga* (Path) and Not Experience *Phala* (Fruition) Immediately?

In the *Alagaddupama Sutta* or Discourse on the Simile of the Snake (*Majjhima Nikaya Sutta* No. 22), the Buddha mentioned two types of yogis who have entered the path, namely:

- **Faith followers** in whom the faculty of faith is predominant and who develop the noble path with faith in the lead; and **Dhamma followers** in whom the faculty of wisdom is predominant and who develop the noble path with wisdom in the lead.

- The Buddha said that: "those *bhikkhus* who are Faith followers or Dhamma followers are all headed for enlightenment."

Because of this statement, certain people have mis-interpreted it to mean that a person who has entered the path need not be a *sotapanna* but can be assured of becoming one before he dies. Otherwise the Buddha would have called them *sotapannas* instead of Faith or Dhamma followers. This is contradictory to the Scriptures, which say that the supra-mundane Dhamma is *akaliko,* immediately effective.

2. The Seven Kinds of Noble Persons

The *Puggala Pannatti* (Designation of Human Types, Chapter 7) defines seven kinds of noble persons, which are explained in the *Visuddhi Magga* (Path of Purification) XXI, 74 as follows:

When the **faith faculty** is the leading faculty in the development of the noble path:

1. He is called **Faith-follower** (*Saddhānusārī*) at the moment of the Stream-entry path;

2. In the other seven instances, i.e., the 3 higher paths and 4 fruitions, he is called **Faith- liberated one** (*Saddhāvimutta*).

When the **concentration faculty** is the leading faculty in the development of the noble path:

3. He is called **Body-witness** (*Kāya-sakkhī*) in all eight instances (4 paths and 4 fruitions). In A. IX, 44 it is said: "A monk enters and abides in the first *jhana* and to the extent of that sphere, abides with body attuned to it i.e. in contact with the body (*kayena phassitva*). The Buddha calls such a person a Body-witness. (The same is repeated with regard to the 7 higher *jhanas*).

4. He is called **Both-ways-liberated one** (*Ubhato-bhāga-vimutta*) when he has reached the highest fruition (*arahatta phala*) after also reaching the immaterial *jhanas*, i.e., he is liberated in both ways, by immaterial *jhana* and the noble path.

When **understanding** or the **wisdom faculty** is the leading faculty in the development of the noble path:

5. He is called **Dhamma-follower** (*Dhammānusārī*) at moment of Stream-entry path;

6. In the next six other instances, i.e., the 3 higher paths and 3 fruitions, he is called **Vision-attainer** (*Ditthippatta*).

7. In the case of the highest fruition, he is called **Wisdom-liberated one** (*Paññā-vimutta*).

From these descriptions (see also **Kitagiri Sutta**, *Majjhima Sutta* No. 70, 14-21), it appears that the names '**Faith follower**', '**Dhamma follower**' and '**Body witness**' are just conventional terms for ***nama-rupas*** (mental-physical aggregates) possessing different types of supramundane consciousness that exist only for one thought-moment. At the succeeding moment of Fruition, the ***nama-rupas*** have changed and they are now designated as **'Faith-liberated ones', 'Vision-attainers' and 'Body witness'** respectively.

By now it should be clear that the seven designations of noble persons (*ariya puggalas*) are just *pannatti* or **conventional terms** for the seven *nama-rupas* with different types of ***lokuttara cittas*** or supramundane consciousness. These *nama-rupas* being *paramatthas* or **absolute realities** last for one thought-moment only.

Those who hold on to the **concept of a permanent entity** seem to think that the Faith follower, Dhamma follower and Body witness are actually persons who have attained the Path but have not yet experienced the Fruition otherwise the Buddha would have called them sotapannas. This mis-interpretation is common among scholars who do not practice the *Satipatthana Vipassana* meditation and are thus unaware of the impermanent nature of the body-mind complex or *nama-rupa*, which they take to be a 'person'.

3. Fruition Arises Immediately After Attainment of Path

According to the **Patthana** (Great Book of *Abhidhamma* in Manuals of Buddhism by Ven. Ledi Sayadaw Mahathera), all preceding classes of consciousness and their mental factors, are related to all succeeding classes of consciousness and their mental factors by the **Relation of Contiguity** (*Anantara Paccaya*). '*Anantara*' is so called because it causes such states of phenomena as are similar to its own to succeed in the immediately following instant. '*Paccaya*' is so called because it renders help. In the phrase 'similar to its own', the word 'similar' is meant to express similarity in respect of having the faculty of being conscious of an object. The path (*magga)* consciousness and fruition (*phala*) consciousness are related by this condition, as both are

supramundane in nature having **Nibbana as their object**. Therefore following the passing away of the path consciousness, there arises immediately the fruition consciousness. It is not possible for one to attain the *sotapatti* path and not realize the fruition (i.e. become a *sotapann*a) immediately but some time later as this would go against the Contiguity Relation. This is like saying that the arising of Fruition consciousness can be caused by ordinary mundane consciousness!

Furthermore in the **Upanisa Sutta** (Discourse on Immediate Causes) of *Samyutta Nidanavagga,* the Buddha has stated that the **Fruition consciousness** (*arahatta phala*) arises due to a cause; it does not arise without a cause. The immediate cause of its arising is the **Path consciousness** (*arahatta magga*). In the *Ratana Sutta* Stanza 5, that pure path the Supreme Buddha praised is described as '**concentration without interruption**' since it produces its fruit quite certainly straightaway next to its own occurrence.

So it is not possible for one to attain the Path (*Magga*) and not experience the Fruition (*Phala*) immediately. The Supramundane Dhamma is *akaliko* ─ **immediately effective**.